

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /081 W

----- 023590

R 261555Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6078

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0276

DEPT ALSO FOR EUR/EX

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB IC

SUBJECT: GENERAL STRIKE UPDATE

1. GENERAL STRIKE CONTINUES INTO TENTH DAY WITH MAJOR ISSUE OF BASIC WAGE INCREASE STILL UNSETTLED. MOST FRINGE BENEFITS HAVE BEEN AGREED ON, ALTHOUGH VARIOUS SPECIFIC DEMANDS FROM INDIVIDUAL UNIONS REMAIN ON TABLE. OVERALL AGREEMENT BY WEEKEND SEEMS REALISTIC POSSIBILITY BUT FAR FROM CERTAINTY.

2. STRIKE IS, BY UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATE, MOST EXTENSIVE IN COUNTRY'S HISTORY, AND FEW ICELANDERS ARE NOT AFFECTED IN SOME BASIC WAY. PUBLIC SCHOOLS REMAIN CLOSED BECAUSE MAINTENANCE STAFFS ARE ON STRIKE ALTHOUGH BANKS AND MOST OTHER OFFICES HAVE MANAGED TO REMAIN OPEN. HEALTH AUTHORITIES ARE MONITORING SITUATION. BUSES STILL RUN ON ABBREVIATED SCHEDULE. TAXIS ARE INCREASINGLY BEING FORCED OUT OF

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SERVICE AS GASOLINE RUNS OUT. COMMERCIAL AIR TRAVEL IS STILL HALTED.

PUBLICATION OF ALL NEWSPAPERS STOPPED YESTERDAY DUE TO PRINTERS' STRIKE. (PRINTERS' UNION, WHICH HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN GENERAL STRIKE, CLAIMS EMPLOYERS WILL NOT EVEN DISCUSS NEW TERMS UNTIL THEY EVALUATE IMPLICATIONS OF WHATEVER CONTRACT IS SIGNED WITH ICELANDIC FEDERATION OF LABOR.) SINCE LAST WEEKEND, ALL SALES OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES HAVE BEEN BANNED BY JUSTICE MINISTER BECAUSE OF "SPECIAL SITUATION" EXISTING IN COUNTRY.

3. ONLY SIGNIFICANT RELAXATION OF STRIKE HAS BEEN UNION DECISION TO ALLOW RESTRICTED AMOUNTS OF MILK SOLD STARTING YESTERDAY FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE AND THOSE WITH MEDICAL NEED. DAIRY FARMERS, MEANWHILE, CLAIM TO BE HARDEST HIT BY WALKOUT AND ARE DUMPING LARGE QUANTITIES OF MILK DAILY.

4. FISHERMEN'S STRIKE IS NOW ALMOST TWO WEEKS OLD. RELIABLE ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TWO STRIKES IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE NOW, BUT ONE NEWSPAPER HAS OFFERED WHAT SEEMS LIKE PLAUSIBLE ESTIMATE THAT COUNTRY IS LOSING AVERAGE OF TWO PERCENT OF NATIONAL PRODUCTION FOR EACH WEEK OF WALKOUT.
MARTIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, GENERAL STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976REYKJA00276
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760073-0609
From: REYKJAVIK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760210/aaaaahvi.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: castelsl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2004 by schwenja>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2004 by castelsl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GENERAL STRIKE UPDATE
TAGS: ELAB, IC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006